



## **Vermont, Other New England States Create Common System for Reporting on Educational Performance**

### ***State-led Initiative Works to Make Data Quality and Regional Comparability in Public Education a Top Priority***

**BARRE** – The Vermont Agency of Education, along with state education agencies in five other states, released two annual reports on public school performance, the Agency announced today.

Beginning in 2009, the five state education agencies participating in the [New England Secondary School Consortium](#)—Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont—have been collecting, calculating, and reporting high school graduation rates, high school dropout rates, and postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion rates using a common set of procedures and methodologies developed by a regional team of data specialists from each of the five state agencies. The Consortium is today releasing the first two annual reports on public-school performance for the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years.

“We are very pleased to have agreement in this five-state consortium on use of common metrics to measure outcomes,” said John Fischer, Deputy Secretary at the Vermont Agency of Education. “There is no other initiative such as this where five states have collaborated on the fundamental re-design of high schools.”

“These reports signify a huge step forward in regional collaboration,” said Beth Miller, director of research and evaluation for the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. “For the first time, five New England states have come to agreement on how they measure [student outcomes](#), and furthermore are sharing that information with the public. The data in these reports have been critical to the foundation as we measure college readiness in the region, and I’m sure many other organizations and individuals will find the reports equally significant.”

While education agencies throughout the country have made significant investments in their individual state data systems, the New England Secondary School Consortium’s [Common Data Project](#) may be the first initiative of its kind to bring together several states in a collaborative, multiyear effort to improve the accuracy, reliability, and comparability of public-education data across state lines. As more school-improvement initiatives and programs use state-collected data on public schools to determine priorities and measure progress, data quality has become an increasingly higher priority for educators, policy makers, and philanthropic foundations.

“As we work to improve the college and career readiness of Maine students, it’s critical we understand their outcomes both in our high schools and in our postsecondary institutions, and how they compare to those being realized by students throughout the region,” said Maine Department of Education

Acting Commissioner Rachelle Tome. "Through this unprecedented collaboration with our New England colleagues, we are improving data quality and consistency across our five states so that education leaders, policy makers, and members of the public can be better informed in making data-driven decisions that truly improve how our public schools are supporting students and preparing them for success after they graduate."

Through the Common Data Project, the five agencies of education develop standardized procedures intended to eliminate unwanted variance that may result from divergent system designs, differing interpretations of agreed-upon rules, or computational errors. Recognizing the critical importance of accurate, high-quality data when it comes to making informed decisions about improving public schools, project leaders also created a series of quality-control mechanisms that further improve the reliability and comparability of state-reported data.

"The five member states have worked cooperatively to establish common performance indicators that are of significant importance to local communities, educators, business, non-profit organizations, and others," said J.P. Beaudoin, founder of Research in Action, Inc. and an advisor to the project. "Each state representative team worked tirelessly to create a 'first of its kind' process for sharing data practices and results, while concurrently providing a national example of state collaboration."

The project's first two annual reports (2014 and 2013), as well as the guidelines developed and followed by the participating states, are publicly available on the New England Secondary School Consortium website: [newenglandssc.org/resources/data](http://newenglandssc.org/resources/data)

The New England Secondary School Consortium is a regional partnership working to advance forward-thinking innovations in secondary education that will empower the next generation of citizens, workers, and leaders. The Consortium is funded by the [Nellie Mae Education Foundation](http://NellieMaeEducationFoundation.org) and coordinated by the [Great Schools Partnership](http://GreatSchoolsPartnership.org).

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